



**One Hundred Ninth Congress
U.S. House of Representatives
Committee on Homeland Security
Washington, DC 20515**

June 8, 2005

The Honorable Christopher Cox
Chairman
Committee on Homeland Security
United States House of Representatives
Washington, D.C. 20540

Dear Chairman Cox:

The purpose of this letter is to request that the Committee on Homeland Security hold a hearing in the next two weeks on the allegations surrounding the detention of enemy combatants at the U.S. Military facility at Guantanamo Bay, Cuba.

As you may recall, a Congressional delegation composed of Members of the Homeland Security Committee and other Members of Congress, traveled to the military prison facility at Guantanamo Bay in February 2004. During that tour, our delegation witnessed the interrogation of detainees. When we inquired about the use of harsher methods of interrogation, including the use of torture, we were assured that although some detainees may receive severe treatment, torture is never invoked. To buttress the assurances that torture was not used, we were provided with information about the effective but civilized nature of the interrogation methods employed. Moreover, we were assured that the interrogation methods employed at Guantanamo produced valuable information calculated to assist our nation fight the wars in Afghanistan and Iraq and ultimately would prove valuable in assuring the safety of our homeland.

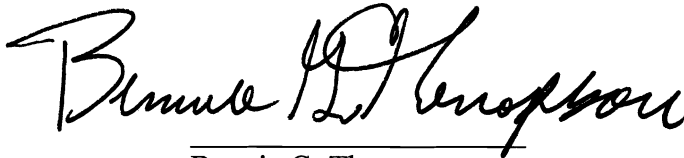
Recent reports, however, call into question the activities we witnessed and the information we were given during our visit to Guantanamo. In November 2004, the International committee of the Red Cross released a report asserting that the U.S. military has used tactics that are tantamount to torture on detainees at Guantanamo Bay. In April 2005, a former military translator at Guantanamo stated that the U.S. military staged interrogations of terrorism suspects for Members of Congress and other officials who visited Guantanamo. In June 2005, Amnesty International reported that there was evidence of torture and widespread cruel and degrading treatment. Also in June 2005, the Pentagon released a report which acknowledged mishandling of the Holy Quoran by military personnel at Guantanamo.

As duly elected federal officials and members of a co-equal branch of government—the Congress— long-standing principles of comity and the U.S. Constitution require that we are provided with truthful information from the executive branch or any of its agencies when we are operating in our official capacity. Whenever we are confronted with instances which seem to indicate that the credibility and candor of those carrying out policies of the U.S. government may be questioned, it is our duty to determine the truth and resolve any doubts.

We have been repeatedly told that the information supplied by individuals held at Guantanamo Bay have a bearing on the domestic security of the United States. Therefore, it would seem that the alleged mistreatment of individuals held at Guantanamo affects this Committee's duty to assure that the federal government operates to ensure the safety and security of America.

In light of the many reports from credible sources which tend to indicate that as a Congressional delegation, members of this Committee were not provided with candid information during our visit to Guantanamo, we are requesting that you hold a hearing on this very important issue.

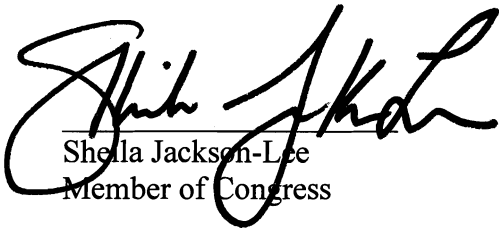
Sincerely,



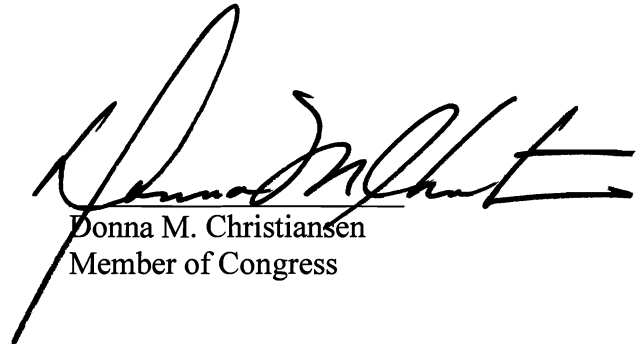
Bennie G. Thompson
Ranking Member



Eleanor Holmes Norton
Member of Congress



Sheila Jackson-Lee
Member of Congress



Donna M. Christiansen
Member of Congress